



# Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



No. IA 09-02

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**Subject:** Dart Three-Point Seatbelt/Harness—Removal from Service

**Area of Concern:** Helicopter Operations

**Distribution:** Helicopter Operations

**Discussion:** During rappel mock-ups in a Bell medium helicopter, four seatbelts broke apart when re-clasping during re-entry into the helicopter. Six other seatbelts would stick in the open position ([SAFECOM 09-0263](#)). Although re-entry into the helicopter is often an energetic procedure, the seatbelts were not subjected to any force that would be considered excessive. The seatbelts/harnesses were installed in this helicopter only nine months prior to this event.

After examining the seatbelts, it was determined that the springs located in the back of the locking mechanism puts pressure on the plastic back plate of the seat belt. Over time, that pressure may cause the plate to break.

Additionally, the detent button has a tendency to "stick" when depressed, so that when an individual attempts to re-clasp the seatbelt or shoulder strap, the force of inserting the male end into the female buckle causes the buckle to break.





**Subject:** Dart Three-Point Seatbelt/Harness Removal from Service

This model, part number is D3579-044, has been discontinued by DART. After discussions, we have received a notice from DART that they have contacted the customers that have purchased these harness kits and advised them of the issues. DART has agreed to replace on warranty this model with another model at no charge. It appears that contact has been made with currently contracted vendors, however this Tech Bulletin is issued to ensure the field is aware and to be on the lookout.

**Recommendation:** Immediately check and inspect all seatbelts/harnesses for the DART model D3579-044 in all Bell medium helicopters and remove from service as well as others with discernable defects. For the USFS, contact Vince Welbaum at vwelbaum@fs.fed.us or 208-387-5634 and your Aviation Maintenance Inspector For DOI, contact David Parsons at David\_Parsons@nbc.gov. or call 208-433-5081. And don't forget to submit a SAFECOM for any defective seatbelts/harnesses discovered.



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